Body Image

Body image is something that many young people struggle with.

There are often three parts to body image.

- The first is how you perceive your body. A young person's perception of their body may not be correct. For example, they may see themselves as obese when in fact that are actually a healthy weight
- The second part to body image is the way that a person feels about their body. This sees how content or discontent they are with their body, in regards to things such as weight, shape and individual parts of their body
- The third part is what they think about their body. A person who is dissatisfied with their body will spend a large amount of time thinking about their body and how they can change it

How a young person perceives, feels and thinks about their body will then shape their behaviour. If a person is not happy with their body image, then they may isolate themselves from others, they may start to do some harmful behaviours to change the way they look (such as excessive amounts of exercise, changes in eating patterns).

What can we do to improve our body image:

While many young people try to change their appearance to feel better about their body image, the real and healthy impact comes through improving our body image. This is because we can change the way we see, feel and think about ourselves. Some ways that we can do this is:
- Avoid negative self-talk. Replace this by saying positive things to ourselves every day, particularly when we look in the mirror
- Focus on the positive qualities and character traits we have, leading to a more overall positive view of ourselves
- Appreciate what your body can do rather than focusing on what it can't do
- Set healthy, positive goals (such as eating well, exercising regularly) rather than trying to lose a certain amount of weight
- Don't compare your looks with other people. Most people we see in the media look unrealistic and only represent a small part of society. Everyone looks different and we need to be comfortable with how we look

A healthy body image will see a young person spending less time thinking about how they look and more time on the things that matter!